



Lake Fluvanna-Ruritan 2005



Lake Fluvanna-Ruritan is a beautiful 50-acre impoundment owned and managed by the Department of Game & Inland Fisheries. It has provided an excellent fishery since the Department began an annual fertilization program in 1970. The fertilizer enhances the bloom of phytoplankton in the lake, and this is what gives the water its green color. By increasing the abundance of phytoplankton, which comprise the base of the food chain, the abundance of fish is also enhanced substantially.

An electrofishing sample taken during spring, 2004 yielded seven species of fish: largemouth bass, bluegill, black crappie, channel catfish, chain pickerel, warmouth sunfish, and redear sunfish.

Largemouth bass was the most abundant species collected in the sample. This was quite a surprise because sunfish generally outnumber bass in most lakes. However, past records indicate that this has happened before in Fluvanna-Ruritan. Even though they were abundant, they were not stunted; bass exceeding 20 inches were collected. As would be expected with such an abundant population, growth was a little slow. Although you are not as likely to catch a large bass in this lake because they are so abundant, it's a great place to catch a lot of bass. It's a great place to fish with the family.

Bluegill abundance has rebounded nicely compared with 2000, when the lake was last sampled. Although a lot of these fish are from recent year classes and are still a little small for table fare, there is a fair supply of fish up to 8.5 inches. Fishing for bluegill should only get better over the next couple of years as these young fish mature, especially considering that bluegill growth has always been good in this lake due to the fertilization program.

Black crappie was the third most abundant species collected in this lake, but they were all small to intermediate in size. Electrofishing is generally not the best method for collecting crappie because they frequent deeper water than bass and sunfish. As a result, the status of this population is not well understood. If time allows, we may attempt to get a better handle on this population using trap nets.

Channel catfish also frequent deeper water, and electrofishing is not the preferred method for evaluating their populations in lakes either. We only collected two, but they are being stocked annually, so you always have a good chance of catching one.